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THE FOUR-YEAR LATIN PROGRAMME OF THE COMMITTEE OF TWELVE

PROFESSOR BENNETT's criticism of this programme, in the April SCHOOL REVIEW, calls for a word of counter-criticism. In the first place, it is not necessarily a mistake to postpone the reading of Cæsar or Nepos beyond the first year. Neither of these authors is fervidly interesting to the beginning student. It is not their difficulty that makes them undesirable at an early stage, so much as the fact that for the first year the pupil can be better occupied. As much study of Roman life and legend as can be accomplished without distraction; an amount of written work quite the equivalent of the reading—at least, so far as time is concerned; and, in general, the most varied attempts to supplement intelligent form-practice with information about the Romans themselves—these would seem to be better pabulum for the active, fickle minds of young students than a steady march through Cæsar or Nepos. By the second year such a progress will be easier, because the attention will have been attracted to Roman things and some facility in studying gained.

Secondly, it is not an unmixed evil to "interrupt the continuity of Cicero by reading Virgil." Possibly, from the point of view of the Latinist alone, there may be some loss, but from that of human interest there is everything to be gained. Few men even—of boys it is not necessary to speak—would thrive on a year's study of a single author. There is variety which is dissipation, but there is also a variety which is a redemption from dullness. Pupils who have acquired an almost mechanical facility in reading Cæsar call Nepos "hard!" It is better to break up, so far as can be done without serious diffusion of effort, the notion on the pupil's part that the author whom he has studied for a year represents normal Latin, and that a new author can only be regarded as a painful freak. The man in the boat rows better if he can run as well, and it is not a mere analogy to say that the student of Cicero will be in like manner benefited by an excursion into Virgil, or that the boy who has hammered at Cæsar for a term will return refreshed from a ramble in Ovid. He will still have in his nostrils the aroma of poetry, and he will quite probably have gained a new zest for solid work in reading Latin prose. J. EDMUND BARSS

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